

597 Kildare Road  
London ON N6H 3H8  
December 11, 2013

*via email*

Ms. Cathy Saunders, City Clerk  
City Hall  
London Ontario

Dear Ms. Saunders:

**Re: Proposed Sale of Land – Westminster Ponds-Pond Mills Environmentally Significant Area**

I am writing to ask Council to reject a recommendation from Corporate Services Committee regarding sale of property located within the Westminster Ponds-Pond Mills Environmentally Significant Area (ESA). This was item 6 on the CSC agenda of December 10, 2013.

As noted in the staff report related to this item, the city in 2012 adopted project “Return to Nature” to address encroachments on public lands by private owners. Encroachments involve illegal use of city-owned lands. Encroachments into ESAs have been identified at hundreds of locations throughout the city.

In the case discussed at CSC on December 10, a recommendation was made to “resolve” two encroachments within the Westminster Ponds-Pond Mills ESA by declaring the properties surplus and selling the property to the adjacent owners on Agincourt Gardens.

The lands in question have been part of the Westminster Ponds-Pond Mills ESA from the very beginning. This land was already public land in 1975, when the province announced its partnership with the city for acquisition of additional lands to protect the Westminster Ponds-Pond Mills area.

Sale of land within this ESA is a breach of trust with the community that has worked for so long to ensure public ownership and protection for lands in Westminster Ponds-Pond Mills area. What message does this send to neighbours who have already agreed to remove encroachments? Will they now be applying for similar consideration? What credibility will city officials have in approaching other owners about encroachments? Sale of land as outlined in the staff report and recommended to Council by CSC sets a dangerous precedent for the hundreds of other encroachment locations in ESAs across the city. The proposed sale adjacent to Agincourt Gardens is not consistent with the Conservation Master Plan for the Westminster Ponds-Pond Mills ESA. I note that the city received correspondence from the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority opposing sale of these lands.

I urge you to reject the recommendation of CSC. Please keep these lands in public ownership, and return them to their natural state.

Yours truly,

David Wake